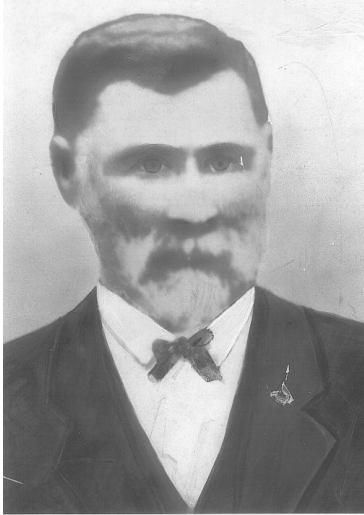


## Blossett

*This document was written by Margery Jean Fenton (née Grylls, \*1921)*



John Blossett

John Blossett liked to be a mystery to his family, according to his 3rd daughter Harriet. She was unmarried and cared for her parents in Myers St Bendigo, until her mother died in 1920, when she moved to a larger house at 59 Wills St, where she kept boarders as well as caring for her father. He was a sufferer of arthritis and became very irritable. He had an implacable dislike of Roman Catholic Irish but was very knowledgeable with his Bible. He told Harriet that the Archbishop of Melbourne was on the wharf to meet him on 20.5.1869 when he arrived on the "Coldstream" but that he evaded him. There were 133 Irish passengers on that boat, English 83 and Scotch 23.

Harriet believed that it was for his own good that he left Ireland. This was at the time of the Disestablishment in Ireland (the severing of the legal connection between the Church of Ireland (Anglican) and the State) during which time there was a great deal of ill-feeling between those who worshipped at the Church of Ireland and Roman Catholics. Also there were several attempts at uprisings by the Fenian movement (Irish Republican Brotherhood). Knowing John's temperament it certainly would have been much safer for him in Australia.



Jean Kerr

He married Jean Kerr at St Paul's Anglican Church Myers St Bendigo on 30.11.1871, possibly aged about 28. He was the son of John Blossett, farmer, of Cavan Ireland and Margaret (née Beatty). John and Jane (Jean) lived at Axe Creek (Emu Creek?) near Bendigo and had a small farm and cut and carted wood for the mines and hospital in Bendigo.

Jean (\*~1853) came to Australia to her uncle William Kerr at Mandurang on the "Star of India" (Plymouth 18.3.1871 – 14.7.1871) with her brother William, a "shop boy" (William Alexander Kerr, died at Echuca 1925 aged 71). She was 18 and listed as a spinner. There were 104 Irish women and 65 Irish men of the 329 adults on the ship. Her parents were John James Kerr \*6.7.1826, a Spinning Master of Keady, County Armagh, and Mary (née Morrow). They were married 22.10.1846. I feel sad that Harriet, who desperately wanted to know about her parents, could have found this information in the Parish Register of St Paul's across the street.

John and Jane Blossett had 13 children, of whom 11 survived. She must have been pregnant or nursing most of her child-bearing years:

1. Mary Jane \*1872 Sandhurst – no wonder the eldest daughter left home and went to Western Australia and did not communicate again. I'm not certain about this.



Annie Maria

2. Annie Maria \*1874 Strathfieldsaye



Harriet

3. Harriet Jane \*1876 Strathfieldsaye – †1955, Bendigo: remained unmarried and was a prop to her parents, her siblings, and their children. Her parents lived with her at “Medic Terrace” Myers St Bendigo, but when her mother died 22.8.1920 she lived in a larger house at 59 Wills St Bendigo, where she was able to maintain herself and her father by taking in boarders. She often had nieces or nephews staying with this favourite aunt, particularly when their mothers were ill or confined. When her divorced sister Elsie died she reared the three children, Ivy, Jack, and Len. Later she suffered a stroke and was paralysed on her left side and lived with her sisters, May, Flossie, and Eva. She was still not idle but did what she could by washing up and setting tables etc. She bore her handicap bravely and was the kindest person. .

4. John William \*†



May and Eva



George

5. Mary Martha May \*28.8.1879 – †27.11.1954 Kerang, m19.3.1902 to Joseph Henry Shipp \*15.8.1873 Mincha – †18.8.1948 Kerang. They lived on a lovely farm “Uondo” between Dingwall and Normanville. He was a very successful farmer and she was a good helpmate. Joe and May built a fine brick home “Cressy” in Kerang which was the focus for many of their relations. Aunt Lizzie Paul, a distant cousin, and Aunt Harriet were both cared for there. They had two sons

Henry (Harry) \*6.2.1903, Harry met his future wife Linda Giblett when she was a trainee teacher at Bendigo and boarding with Aunt Harriet.

Alan \*13.2.1904 – †9.6.1958. Alan married Eleanor Moran \*1904 – †198?.

6. George Robert \*1884 Strathfieldsaye – †1970, aged 85 was a carpenter and wheelwright – a very important trade in the days of horse drawn vehicles. Not long before he died he was called to give expert evidence in the case of a damaged replica of a Cobb & Co coach. He married Alma Maud Bennetts †1925 aged 43, but had a sad life. Alma died young and his only son John was killed in World War 2, and shortly after her marriage at the end of the war daughter Vera also died. Another daughter was Dorothy Maud Blossett, †1971 aged 60. George was remembered as a very honest and upright man.

7. Fanny Margaret \*1886 – †1963 Beechworth, became mentally disturbed at puberty and was confined. Her mother visited here once a month without telling anyone where she was going. No-one of the next generation knew anything about her. Aunt Harriet had told me, as her duty, when I was married. I told no-one; so it came as a big shock to Des and Rex when her sister Eva was contacted to be informed that she was very ill with pneumonia.



Elsie

8. Elsie Maud Winifred \*1887 married McGrath but was left with 3 young children: Ivy m1 Jim Perkins, m2 McKain; John (Jack); and Len. I believe she survived by caring for State Wards. Many widows were forced to do this in the days before pensions. They were paid a pittance but it enabled the family to eat. Joe Shipp and Bill Fenton occasionally sent help.

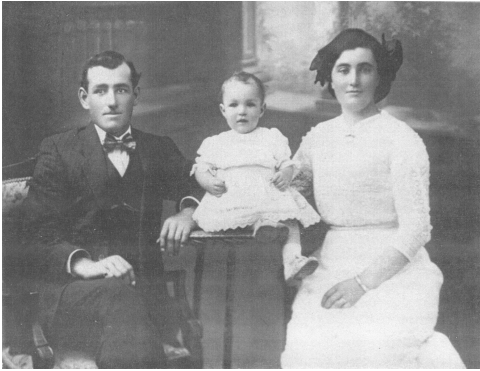


The McGrath Family with Ivy



Stan

9. Stanley Rupert \*1888 † Sydney. When he was a young man (early 30s) he visited Bill and Eva Fenton. He said he was on his way up North. In 197? he appeared again having spent all the intervening years on the opal fields at Lightning Ridge. He then lived in Sydney until he died. Rex collected his pitifully few belongings and Des and Rex saw that he was buried.



Flossie, Stanley Mahar and Horace

10. Florence Margaret (Marguerite?) married Stanley Mahar and lived on a farm at Budgerum East where three children were born:

Evelyn Kathleen (Tiny) \*29.12.1914 m26.11.1935 to Percy Benjamin Fenton \*17.2.1908 – †1.7.1997

Horace

Kathleen, m Syd Edwards.

Flossie and Stan were divorced and she later remarried. She was a very caring person and often cared for nieces and nephews.



Eva

11. Evelyn Kathleen Morrow \*5.12.1894 Emu Ck – †22.10.1984 Kerang: came to help her sister May and met and married Joe's nephew Bill Fenton \*26.10.1894 – †14.7.1962 at St Paul's Bendigo in 1915. They lived nearby (Fenton's Lake) then moved to a wheat farm at Normanville. Bill was a good farmer and Eva always a hard worker. She took the responsibility of boarding the teachers from 1924 until 1944 and provided morning tea for the cream truck driver three times a week for 22 years. She and Bill were very hospitable, but one day she looked out the window to see Bill bringing in the Bank Manager for morning tea: she bitterly remarked "if another thing with a mouth on it comes on this place, I'm leaving". No wonder, after feeding the family, the teacher, the calves, the hens, the dogs, the cats and the parrot. Their children were:

Desmond William \*4.2.1917 – †26.3.1981, m27.5.1944 Margery Jean Grylls \*23.8.1921

Laurence Stanley \*6.11.1918 – †5.10.1987 m1955 Melva May Emmett (née Balnaves)

Jean \*†

Marcia May Florence \*3.2.1924, m14.9.1946 Donald Vincent Clark \*1925 – 26.3.1999

Rex Ormond \*1.7.1925, m4.3.1950 Judith Penhalluriack \*30.6.1925

Eva and Bill built a brick veneer home at 12 Dunlop St Kerang but Eva still had boarders. She liked having young people in the house. Bill continued occasionally to go out to the farm and Eva enjoyed her bowls until she had a stroke which affected her speech. She told me once she never told lies as she was never afraid enough of anyone to lie. She was a wonderful mother and a very loyal person, but could lie if needed.



Bill and Eva Fenton, photo taken just after her brother Bill left with the AIF for World War 1 in 1915. She has been crying.

12. Alexander \*†



Bill

13. William John James (Bill) \*1896 – †1957 at Heidelberg aged 61, enlisted and served in World War 1 and was severely wounded. He married Linda Vistarini and until his health broke down they had a dairy farm at Dingwall, later owned by Denny and Edie Bettinelli. Their children were

Kathleen Mary \*3.7.1921, m Stanly Sheward

Marion \*11.8.1922, m18.1.1947 Donald Cameron \*13.11.1922

Joan \*25.1.1934

John Blossett was remembered by his grandchildren as a white-haired impatient old man with two sticks because of his arthritis. In the undated photo that we have of Jean she is an attractive well-groomed, upright woman with lovely hair and eyes and work-worn hands. She was remembered by all who knew her as a gentle, lovely person. They have left a heritage of some very fine descendants.